

# Silent Voices

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Summary: Misty is in a terrible accident and loses her voice. When she realizes that she loves a special someone, how will she tell him?

\*just updated. New beginning and ending.\*

## 1. Part 1

### Silent Voices

><br>"Misty!" a young man cried, waking up from his fitful slumber. The darkness enveloped the room, and moonlight streamed through the open window. The sheer curtains tumbled around like milky froth from the cool breeze outside. The whole scene looked eerily peaceful, but the rapidly beating heart of Ash Ketchum testified otherwise. His forehead was covered in perspiration, and it took him several minutes to realize that he was home, in his own bed, and not in the horrifying nightmare that had, in reality, occurred years ago. The accident kept replaying in his mind like a never-ending film. Ash threw back the covers and got out of bed. No more sleep would come tonight. He went downstairs and into the kitchen, where he proceeded to boil some milk for hot chocolate. When it was ready, he took the drink and headed outside, slumping down on the front porch. He gazed up at the stars, sipping the cooling hot chocolate and thinking about the past.

><br>~\*~\*~

><br>"Ash, would you please slow down? You're giving me a headache!" Misty Waterflower complained. Ash ignored her. If anything, he ran faster, peering into hollow logs, into flower filled meadows bursting with life. Butterflies danced across the petals, and Ash stooped and picked a few flowers, gave them to Misty, shattered the dreamy look in her eyes by telling her maybe THIS would shut her up, and running ahead again. Misty pressed a hand to her forehead and groaned, looking skyward as if to say, "Why me?" Brock chuckled lightly beside her.

><br>"Same old Ash," he said with a grin. They were making their way through Viridian Forest, heading to Pallet Town. Ash was on the lookout for new pokémon again, but Misty didn't know why he bothered. All there was in Viridian Forest were bug pokémon and Pikachu. He

already had a pikachu. Misty looked around, keeping an eye out for any gross bug pokemon. Misty clasped the blossoms in her hand, smelling their sweet fragrance. Misty was inhaling the scent, when she caught another smell. She lifted her head in alarm and smelled again. Yes, it was exactly what she thought it was.

><br>"Ash!" she said worriedly. He heard the seriousness in her voice this time and stopped short. He flashed her a lopsided smile.

><br>"I know, I know. Stop running around, I'm giving you a headache. Right?" He guessed. Misty ignored him and her eyes opened wider.

><br>"Call me paranoid, Ash, but is that smoke I smell?" Ash furrowed his brows and thought for a minute. He smelled the air as well, but he didn't seem worried.

><br>"Aw, Misty, it's probably a campfire or something," he said as he walked ahead. "It's just some camper cooking, or trying to get warmâ€¦" he stopped as he pushed aside some shrubbery and glanced at the scene before him. The forest was alight. "Or maybe not," he said weakly. Not far ahead, maybe half a mile away or so, dead pine needles had caught on fire. The flames had spread to rotten logs, bushes, and even trees. Team Rocket stood nearby with frantic looks on their faces. Ash stormed over to them.

><br>"What the..?! How did you do this?!" Ash asked them furiously. Jesse wiped her smoke streaked face and told him,

><br>"Our new guaranteed-to-catch-pikachu machine, um, exploded," she said. "It was all Meowth's fault!" Jesse said quickly. Meowth glared at her. Ash rolled his eyes and sighed. He walked towards the flames, muttering just loud enough for them to hear,

><br>"Yeah yeah. It's Ash to the rescue again. No, don't ever think of anything to -help- him through his daily life, he doesn't have enough troubles," He surveyed the scene. His hand reached out to his belt, and he lifted off a pokeball.

><br>"Oh no.. he's not gonna.." Misty said.

><br>"Oh, yeah. He's gonna," Brock said.

><br>"SQUIRTLE! GO!" Yelled Ash. A red beam shot out of the center of the pokeball. "We've got to help put out the fire, Squirtle. Water gun, now!"

>A torrent of water shot out of Squirtle's mouth and it ran closer to the fire to have more effect. That was a big mistake, as the fire was by now, uncontrollable. A burning log fell across Squirtle's escape route, and it was in a circle of fire. It looked around wildly for a way out. Squirtle started blasting the fire with cold streams of water, but if nothing else, the fire sputtered and flared up higher. The heat was causing squirtle to look shimmery from where Ash stood, and squirtle gave up and went into its shell. Ash cried out and ran towards the crackling flames. Pulling out squirtle's pokeball again, Ash lifted it and called out for squirtle to return. A crimson beam shot out of the sphere towards the turtle pokemon. The ray hit the blaze and bounced back like a yo-yo. Ash lowered the pokeball and his arms dropped to his sides. <br>

>"It.. can't penetrate through that heat," Ash whispered quietly. Then his voice became louder and he yelled out, "I'm not going to let Squirtle die!" He hesitated only a moment longer then sprinted into the scorching fire. He didn't seem to hear Misty scream for him not to go, or Brock's startled gasp. Neither did he hear Jessie say softly, "Stupid kid. I wish I was that brave." Nor would he have listened if he had heard.<br>Ash felt a searing pain flare through his body, and then he was in the heart of the flames. He looked around, shielding his eyes with one hand, and holding his jacket up to cover his nose and mouth with the other. His mother's voice echoed

through his head. "In a fire, always crawl if you can. That way, the smoke won't be as thick." Ash bent down as low as he could and then moved towards Squirtle. He momentarily let go of his jacket and recalled his pokemon. Replacing his pokeball back on his belt, he suddenly looked around at his surroundings. His eyes widened as he realized where he was, and the rashness of his actions. He couldn't have let squirtle die, though, and despite his growing fear, he felt that he had done the right thing.

><br>"Team Rocket! Run and get help!" Brock yelled at the trio, and sensing the urgency and seriousness in his voice, they nodded and sprinted off into the distance. A voice could be heard as they ran: "This is all your fault James! Now he's going to die and then who're we going to steal from? We can't steal a dead kid's Pikachu!" Jessie's voice faded away and was gone. Brock turned back just in time to see Misty run through the fire into the untouched area where Ash was located, despite the fact that the wall of flames were too thick and dense to reach the other side without serious injury. "NO MISTY!" He yelled, but she didn't listen, and pressed forward, flesh searing, until she reached Ash. She grabbed Pidgeotto's pokeball from Ash's belt and released the pokemon.

><br>"Ash.." She said weakly. "Take Pidgeotto and fly to safety!" Her eyes closed and she slumped to the ground.

><br>"NO!" He said firmly. "I can't leave you behind. You have to come with me; it's your only chance. By the time Pidgeotto came back for you, you would be dead." Misty did not answer, but she moaned with pain. Ash lifted her up gently and placed her on Pidgeotto's back. He climbed on as well, and mumbled to the bird pokemon, "You have a heavy burden, but this is important. Fly us to safety, Pidgeotto." Pidgeotto chirped in reply and started flapping its wings. They lifted into the air, slow and unbalanced. Pidgeotto struggled mightily, but failed when they were about ten metres (Author's note: I'm Canadian, so it's in metric) in the air. Misty tumbled to the ground, striking her head on a rock with a sickening crunch. She twitched, and lay still. Pidgeotto did not notice that Misty had fallen off. It started flying again, and landed on the other side of the inferno. Ash was safe, but Misty was not. As Brock ran over to Ash, the bird Pokemon looked back and found Ash crying. It looked quizzically at its master, until Ash blurted out that Misty was still in there. Brock looked horrified, and then began to cry too. Pidgeotto, trying to make Ash feel better, flew around the perimeter of the fire, but found no way back inside.

><br>

>Misty had fallen 10 terrifying meters and landed on a rock. A dizzy feeling clouded her thinking. Misty struggled to keep from breathing in the smoke but failed. Finally she accepted the truth. She would probably die. At least Ash was safe. With that knowledge Misty sank into peaceful oblivion.<br>

>\*~\*<br>

>The fire trucks arrived and Officer Jenny stepped out to see a hysterical Ash with Brock comforting him. Ash had recalled Pidgeotto and was sitting on a boulder 50 feet from the flames, shivering despite the unbearable heat. Officer Jenny walked over to them while the fire fighters tried to put out the fire.<br>"Do you know what happened here? I'll have to file a report," she whipped out a notepad and held her pen poised above the pad.

><br>"Help Misty! She's in there somewhere!" Ash yelled, breaking into fresh tears.

><br>"A girl is in there!?" Officer Jenny asked, horrified. She pulled out her radio and reported, "A girl is stuck in the middle of the fire! Get her out! And get an ambulance out here!" She stuck the

radio back in her pocket and took Ash's report. Finally out of the radio came a fuzzy voice,  
><br>"We've got her! She's out. We're loading her in the ambulance now. She's in rough condition. It looks doubtful to me," and then the voice ended. Ash ran over to the ambulance with Brock behind him. Ash asked the driver if they could come. The driver replied,

><br>"Sure, but only one more can come. One of you has to stay." Ash looked at Brock. Brock grinned tiredly.

><br>"You go on, Ash. I'll come along later." Ash nodded and climbed in the ambulance next to the unconscious Misty.

><br>\*~\*

><br>At the hospital Ash sat in the waiting room with his head in his hands. Misty was in the emergency room. Ash felt guilty. Guilty he didn't do more. In his mind he knew he couldn't have done anything for her, but his heart didn't know that. He thought about when they first met, when he had been running away from the spearow and she had fished him out of the river. He had taken an instant liking to her, but would never admit it. He thought about his travels with her, fighting in the Cerulean gym, on the sinking SS Anne, when they battled for Togepi, and when he entered the pokemon league and, after many long hard battles, won. The celebrating after the League. He had come close to telling her how he felt then, but was too scared. He wasn't even sure he could admit it to himself.

><br>"Misty!" Ash cried.

><br>Suddenly the emergency room door opened and a doctor came out.

><br>"Ash Ketchum?" the doctor said. "Come with me." Ash got out of his seat and followed the doctor through the door. They headed left into another wing. They entered a hospital room. Ash nearly fainted. There was Misty, quiet and still on the bed. She had burns all over. Bandages covered her head and the rest of her body. Only her face was showing. Tubes were surrounding her and a heart monitor blipped beside her. An IV ran into her arm. "We've got her stabilized, but it doesn't look good," the doctor told Ash. "She was exposed to the smoke and heat for so long, her vocal cords are failing. Her lungs are weak, and she has burns on her entire body. She was unconscious when they found her, and has now lapsed into a coma due to shock. I'm sorry, but she only has a 30 percent chance of waking up. If she does, she has also bruised her lower spinal cord because of the fall she took. She will most likely be temporarily paralyzed, needing intensive therapy. And she will probably never speak again. I'm sorry."

>Ash collapsed in the chair in the corner of the room. <br>

>"She might not live?" Ash asked painfully.<br>

>"Unfortunately, she doesn't have a good chance. But only time will tell. I'll leave you alone now." The doctor turned to leave the room. Ash said,<br>

>"Doctor?" The doctor turned around. "She'll live, doctor, she's a fighter. She'll live."<br>

>"Let's hope so." The doctor left the room.<br>

>\*~\*<br>

>For the next few weeks, Ash never moved from Misty's side. Brock came in every day with Pikachu and Togepi but was staying at the Pokemon Center in town. As they left they flashed Ash a sympathetic look. They knew how Ash felt about Misty. Ash sat there, day after day, night after night. The weeks melted into months. Still Ash sat there, until the day when Misty woke up.<br>

>Misty felt strange. For the longest time she had felt like she was floating in an unreal world. She felt brief flashes of pain, but not

too bad. Misty knew she had to get out of her trapped state. She knew someone she cared about would be waiting if she did. Misty struggled and struggled and finally broke free of the bonds holding her prisoner. Misty opened her eyes slowly.<br>

>"Doctor, she's waking up! Misty's waking up!" a voice boomed in Misty's head. She looked up and sawâ€|Ash! Ash was there. Right beside her bed. Looking at her with such care and tenderness she was shocked. She extended her arms and wrapped them around his waist. He hesitated, then gently wrapped his arms around her. During the months Misty was in a coma, all her injuries were healed, except her temporary paralysis, her damaged vocal cords, and the trauma of her accident. The doctor burst in the door.<br>

>"It's a miracle! You were as good as dead, Miss Waterflower." Misty turned her attention to the doctor and pointed to her throat. "Oh, your vocal cords are seriously damaged. You may not talk again." Misty grabbed a notepad from the table beside her bed and wrote,<br>

>"Do I have any chance of talking again? And what happened to my legs?" The doctor sighed and sat down on the edge of the bed. <br>

>"Misty, do you remember falling off Pidgeotto?" Misty nodded. "Well, you landed on a rock and bruised your spinal cord. You have temporary paralysis. You will walk again, but you need intensive therapy. Tomorrow, if you are well, you will be brought to a training room."  
."

>"Do I have to?" Misty wrote.<br>

>"If you are physically able, yes. You need to regain the use of your legs. As for your voice, you have suffered serious smoke inhalation. You have a slight chance of talking again, but right now we need to concentrate on healing your legs. I'll leave you two alone now." The doctor left the room.<br>Ash turned to Misty.

><br>"I thought I'd lost you," he whispered.

><br>Misty was shocked. Ash was acting as if he.. cared? No. That couldn't be. Ash loved her like a sister and he had always made that known. Misty smiled. She wrote,

><br>"Well, I'm alive, aren't I?"

><br>\*~\*

><br>The next day Ash wheeled Misty into the training room where she would spend much of her time over the next couple of months. Ash had insisted on bringing Misty there himself, lifting her out of the hospital bed and gently setting her in the wheelchair. Then he pushed her through the corridors to the training room. A nurse took over once they were there, and Ash sat on a chair in the corner of the room. He looked around. The room was full of exercise equipment, and a door led off into another room. A therapist checked Misty over, and pronounced her ready to begin her training. All Misty would be doing today was getting a massage, and then some tests to see determine how much feeling was in her limbs. After that was over Ash wheeled Misty back into her room. He sat beside her and they "talked". Ash talking, Misty writing. He told her everything that had happened on That Day and everything since. Misty didn't really have much to say, so she mainly listened. When the nurses came to tell Ash visiting hours was over, and it was 11:00, curfew, Misty begged that Ash could stay with her, please could they just bring in an extra cot? The nurses yielded. The two teens OBVIOUSLY loved each other, and who were they to fool with young love? So they brought in an extra cot. Ash put his things away and went into the bathroom to change. When he came out, he settled down under his covers and sighed. The nurses turned out the lights and left. After about five minutes, Ash propped himself up on his elbow. He looked at Misty. She was already asleep. He guessed

she was tired after her first day of therapy. Since she was asleep..

><br>"Misty, I'm a fool. I guess I have to admit it to myself sometime, Iâ€|Iâ€|love you. With all my heart. I was afraid I'd lost you." And with a sigh, Ash settled back in, letting the dark and the quiet envelop the room, the youth fell asleep.

><br>\*~\*

><br>Misty awoke with the sunlight streaming onto her bed. She'd slept in. Time to get going on their pokemon journey. When she tried to sit up, she felt the leaden weight of her useless legs pulling her down. Startled, she remembered the accident. Misty lay back down. She pulled the covers around her shoulders and cried.

><br>About an hour later Ash woke up. He got out of his cot and stretched, calling over to Misty, "Time to get up!" When she didn't respond, he walked over and put a hand on her shoulder. "Misty?" He heard her crying. "Misty, what's wrong?" She turned over to him and pulled out her notepad.

><br>"I feel so useless," she wrote. Ash stared at her. He burst out,

><br> "Misty, in all the years I've known you, you have never given up. I admired you for your determination, and I don't expect you to give up NOW when you need that determination the most!"

>Misty nodded slowly. "Thanks," she wrote. "I needed that,"<br>

>"Now come on," Ash said. "Time for your therapy session."<br>

## 2. Part 2

Ash wasn't coming with her today. He had said he needed to do something in town.

>Misty accepted that. She wondered what he was up to, of course, but she didn't want to pry. Misty wheeled into the therapy room where her doctor was waiting. The doctor was a middle-aged woman with light brown hair and a pleasant expression. <br>

>"Are you ready, Misty?" she asked. "I'll be your doctor for the next two months or so until you're ready to leave." Misty nodded. She would do anything to seem less helpless in front of Ash. That thought startled her. Blushing fiercely, she pushed all thoughts of Ash to the back of her head. For now.<br>

>\*~\*<br>

>Ash stepped into the bank. He slipped his card into the slot in the machine and punched some buttons. Then he got his card back, along with the money, and left the building. Ash walked across town and into a shop. He glanced around but didn't see what he wanted. Finally he spotted it. The perfect one. Ash brought it to the register and paid for it. It took all his money but she was worth it. Besides, he owed it to her. She had been bothering him about it for years. She couldn't use it now but in a few monthsâ€|Ash grinned and wheeled the bike out of the shop.<br>

>Misty was going swimming. She had wondered why, until the doctor told her it was for strengthening up her legs. It would make her strong again with no risk of injury. Misty changed into a bathing suit with the help of a nurse, and was lowered into the pool. A pool in a hospital, how 'bout that? It was in the basement. The water was lukewarm and Misty enjoyed swimming. Of course, it wasn't really swimming. Just floating while she tried to kick her legs. Misty had to swim for an hour, but she liked it. Unlike the massage afterwards. She didn't like that at all, but she didn't know why. Maybe because of the lack of privacy. That thought made her laugh. She was here to

get better, not gain a lot of privacy! After, Misty wheeled back to her room. The harder training wouldn't begin until most of the feeling was back in her legs, and she could use crutches. Misty climbed back into her bed (hard using only arm strength) and turned on the TV. Oh, good! Her favourite show was on. Misty soon grew bored, she realized that she hadn't seen this show for a long time, because she had been travelling. Without realizing it, she had grown out of a lot of stuff she used to enjoy. Hmm, maybe a soap opera was on. Her sisters liked watching those. Misty flipped to one. After awhile she liked it. It was incredibly funny! All these supposed "real life" situations, people getting shot, people crying, even an evil villain! The time flew by. She didn't notice when Ash came back, a pleased expression on his face. <br>

>"Hi, Misty. Looks like you're having fun," he said, looking amused. Misty looked up and blushed.<br>

>"I uh, don't really like soap operas, there was just nothing else on," she wrote, looking sheepish.<br>

>"Sure Misty. Anyway, have you seen Brock?"<br>

>"He came in about twenty minutes ago, said he had to get a drink," she replied by note. Ash groaned. He turned around and ran out of the room. Several minutes later he pushed Brock in pretty-girl mode into the room. <br>

>"He was down in the nurses' station," was all he said. Misty grinned. Brock snapped out of it with a well placed mallet blow to the head.<br>

>"Misty, what are you doing in the nurses station?" he asked her. Misty rolled her eyes and hit him with the mallet again. <br>

>"Misty, do you want to go outside? We have permission to take you, as long as we stay on the grounds," Ash said. Misty looked at him eagerly. She nodded and they got her wheelchair ready. Ash lifted her into it gently and wheeled her down the hall to the waiting room. Misty waved to some of the nurses, who waved back. Brock lagged behind, staring wistfully at the nurses, who shrunk back at the sight of him. Ash came back, and dragged Brock away. Then they went down to a small park the hospital had outside. Ash parked Misty under a willow tree by a tiny pond. They sat down beside Misty. The trio sat under the tree for hours, Misty out of her wheelchair and sitting propped up against the rough bark. They were silent, mulling over the past few months. Misty wanted to talk to the boys, but couldn't. She could write to them, but her wrists were tired from doing that already. In that moment Misty vowed to get her speech back, no matter what it took.<br>

>\*~\*<br>

>Misty collapsed on her hospital bed, exhausted. It had only been a couple of days since she had regained consciousness, and she was so tired. Sleep would be welcome. Ash and Brock stood in the doorway. <br>

>"Goodnight, Misty. See you tomorrow," Ash said. Misty lifted up an arm and waved goodbye. Her visitors left. Misty was almost asleep when she remembered what she had thought earlier that day. About Ash. She blushed again. Where had that thought come from? She had never thought like that about him before. Okay, maybe a little. But not that strongly. She had always felt a little twinge whenever he was near, that was true, but she had never admitted it was because of Ash. Come to think of it, she had caught herself a couple of times staring at him. I have a problem. Misty thought. Then she fell asleep.<br>

>Early the next morning she thought some more. Did Ash feel the same? Unlikely. He had sat by her bed for months, it was true, but he

didn't like her more than as a friend. When Ash came in for a visit, she looked up and blushed faintly. Ash didn't seem to notice.<br>

>"How are you doing today?" He asked. Misty smiled in reply. Ash seemed nervous and looked away. Misty wondered about that. Ash walked up to her bed and deposited something onto her lap. She looked down.<br>

>"Toge-priiiiiiiiiiii!" Misty's eyes widened and she grabbed the little pokemon and hugged it tightly. Then she set Togepi down and grabbed her notepad. She wrote,<br>

>"But aren't pokemon not allowed in here when they are not inside their pokeballs? And you brought Pikachu in here once too." Ash grinned devilishly.<br>

>"I thought you needed company," he answered. Misty rolled her eyes. But then she smiled in gratitude. Ash stayed with her for a few hours and then left so Misty could rest before lunch. When he left, instead of resting, she worked on getting her voice back.<br>

>1 Month later<br>

>Misty crawled out of bed and rolled into her wheelchair. She was getting stronger every day now. Brock came in the room and saw her all ready. Misty wheeled beside him down the hall. They went outside, to the willow where they had gone a month ago. Ash was already there. He had a walker there beside him. Misty had agreed she would try to walk today. When she was all settled in, she used her arm strength to stand up. A few weeks ago, she had regained most of the feeling in her legs. Now she was going to try to walk. Letting go of the wheelchair, she grabbed the cool metal bars of the walker. Ash stood a few feet away, coaxing Misty to walk towards him. She obliged and took a small, wobbly step. And another. And another until she had walked over to him. Then she collapsed, exhausted but triumphant.<br>

>"You did it, Misty, you did it!" Ash cried. He hugged her, then realized what he was doing. Ash blushed yet again, and let go reluctantly. Misty smiled at Ash and Brock. <br>

>That day was a good day. But there were also some bad ones.<br>

>\*~\*<br>

>Jessie sighed. James was asking why they were there to pay a visit to the girl twerp. Misty. Jessie explained to him,<br>

>"James, you idiot, it was OUR fault Misty is even IN here. The least we could do is visit her and say we're sorry!" Meowth snickered at James. That guy was so dense sometimes. Team Rocket had been fined a lot of money for causing the fire and the Boss had been REALLY mad at them. So they had quit, but decided to stay together instead of going home. Jessie and James had reluctantly given up the Rocket uniforms and changed to wearing civilian clothes. But the boss mad at them was nothing compared to what Misty might think. She had been in a COMA because of them. So they were nervous when they knocked on her open hospital door and stepped in. Misty was alone, staring at them with narrow eyes. Before she could order them to get out, Jessie said, "Misty, we are really, really sorry. We just wanted to tell you that. We've quit Team Rocket." Misty smiled faintly. She pointed to a couple of chairs beside the bed and they sat down, Meowth curled up on James' lap, while James petted him. Misty looked amused. <br>

>"Oh, we captured him," said Jessie. Meowth glared at her. "I mean, he went willingly and with lots of dignity into a pokeball of ours after Likitung beat him up," Jessie said with a smirk. Meowth stretched and said,<br>

>"So how you doin', kid?" meaning Misty. Misty took a notepad out of



her nightstand and wrote something down.<br>

>"I walked yesterday," she wrote. "With a walker. And I'm trying to get my voice back." So they talked, former enemies, now friends, until Ash came in. <br>

>"What are you three doing here?!" Ash demanded with rage in his voice. "Get out!" Jessie looked over at him and said,<br>

>"We aren't doing anything bad! We came to say we're sorry!" <br>

>"A likely story!" Ash spat out. "It was your fault Misty is in here, and I doubt that you've even changed! You are probably here to steal Togepi!" James got up, fury in his face. Meowth jumped away. James walked over to Ash and leaned over him, saying,<br>

>"Say that again. To my face."<br>

>"It. Was. All. Your. Fault." Ash said. James exploded, punching Ash. Ash staggered back and then dove at James, punching him again and again. Jessie cried out,<br>

>"Stop it! We are not here to fight!" Her cries went unheeded. A couple of orderlys came in and dragged a struggling Ash and James out. Jessie turned to Misty and said, "I'm sorry. James has a temper. We'll come back when he's cooled down." Misty nodded and Jessie walked out of the room with Meowth right behind her.<br>

>\*~\*<br>

>Misty smiled to herself. She did it! It was a major triumph for her. Nobody else knew.<br>

>"Ash.." her scratchy voice said. She had regained her voice.

"Ash."<br>

>She had figured it out. And had to tell him.<br>

>2 Weeks later<br>

>"What is it? Misty?" Ash said. Misty had silently pointed to her wheelchair when he came in. "You want to go outside?" Ash asked. Misty nodded. She hadn't told him she could speak yet. She was going to, but had decided to practice more until she knew what to say to him. Ash thought for a minute. They would have to sneak past the nurses, butâ€|<br>

>"Okay, Misty, let's go," he said suddenly. He helped her into her wheelchair, though she didn't need help. He breathed in the smell of her hair, then set her down. They went out the door and down the hall. The corridor was strangely deserted. It WAS "nap time" though. Ash and Misty went through the outside doors and down to the willow that was now their favorite spot. Misty stepped carefully out of her wheelchair. Her legs were still frail and she could collapse if she wasn't careful. With a sigh, she sunk down to the damp ground. It was autumn now and the vibrant red and gold colored leaves floated down from the trees around them. A spicy freshness was in the air, and Misty absently thought of home. Cerulean City. Her sisters would be picking the last bouquets of flowers from the garden, and decorating the house with them. They had always picked the Baby's Breath for her, they said it looked like mist, and that WAS her name. Misty. She sighed and turned to Ash. <br>

>"It's beautiful, isn't it?" he said softly. Now was her chance.<br>

>"Yes, it is," she said quietly, her voice unused for so long. Ash turned and stared at her.<br>

>"Mistyâ€|you canâ€|"<br>

>"Shhâ€|I brought you out here to tell you something," she said slowly, closing her eyes, choosing her words carefully. "I.. well.. have always admired you, Ash. You were determined and caring towards everything and everybody. I came with you, at the beginning, because I admired that about you. I noticed a sort of, spark about you. You were my friend when I needed one. I was so alone. I never would have

left you and I never came for the bike. Friends forever, I always thought. Nothing more. But a long time ago, months ago, when the fire surrounded you, I realized you were more than a friend. But I didn't realize HOW much more. Then when I started my therapy, I looked into your eyes and realized. I realized just exactly how much I cared for you. Ash, I love you. I guess I always have," she trailed off. For a long time everything was silent. A cool breeze blew past, and she shivered. I'm afraid, she realized. Afraid of what he'll say. When she couldn't take the silence anymore, she opened her eyes and looked over at him. He was staring at her, eyes watery. He smiled faintly and took her hand in his. <br>

>"I love you too, Misty. Always have, always will," and that was all he said. They sat there together, for hours, just sitting silently, holding on to each other. They both needed each other. And they knew that they would never be lonely again.<br>

>Later that week..<br>

>Misty looked back at the hospital, her hand clasped in Ash's. They looked at each other and smiled. Misty was released. She could leave. The doctors wondered, of course, and marveled at how fast she had recovered. Ash suddenly covered Misty's eyes with his hand and spun her around. When he took his hand away, Misty gaped. There was a bike, a shiny blue one, just like her old one had looked.<br>

>"Told you I would give it back," Ash said, somewhat smugly. Misty smiled.<br>

>"Never doubted you," she replied.<br>

>"Hey, Ash! Misty! You ready to go?" a voice called in the distance. They turned around. Brock was running toward them. They hadn't told Brock. He had guessed from the way they looked at each other. Finally, Brock had thought when they had come back into the hospital where he had been waiting. They finally realized and told each other. And he had picked up Pikachu, who had smiled, in a way, back. <br>

>"Yeah, we're ready," Misty called back. She climbed on her new bike and pedaled off slowly with Ash and Brock walking beside her. Pikachu rode in the basket.<br>

>"Wait!" They heard voices behind them. Misty wheeled around and faced Jessie, James, and Meowth who were running along behind, trying to catch up to them. Misty rode back to where they were.<br>

>"Can weâ€¦uh.. come with you guys on your journey?" James asked. Misty nodded. <br>

>"Sure. Just two things. One, no trying to capture Pikachu," The former Team Rocket nodded. "Two, you guys, ADMIT it to yourselves that you love each other," Jessie and James looked at one another, then in silent agreement, James held out his hand, which Jessie accepted. They smiled.<br>

>"Then yes, of course you can come with us, but you have to catch up!" Misty laughed, and she turned around again and pedaled back to Ash. Jessie stood quietly with James, while Meowth ran ahead. <br>

>"I love you, Jessie."<br>

>"I love you, James."<br>

>Then the pair ran to catch up with their new friends.<br>

>~\*~ <br>

>Ash smiled as he thought. Memories from the past floated through his mind. Sighing, he put down his mug of cocoa and stretched out his legs wearily. The experience had turned out all right, and he had realized his love for the ordinary girl who was not so ordinary after all. It had turned out well for Team Rocket too, Jessie and James were now married with two young children, a boy and a girl, who

looked remarkably like their parents. The boy looked exactly like James, except for his reddish hair, and the girl looked like Jessie, except for her lavender hair. They were very happy together. As for himself...<br>

>"Ash? Why are you out here?" a soft voice called from the doorway. Ash turned around and looked at his wife with love in his eyes. Her carrot hair blew in wisps around her face, and she smiled as she leaned against the doorframe. She walked towards him and sat down with some difficulty. He smiled and took her hand in his. "Just thinking," he told her, and lifted her hand to his lips and gently kissed her fingertips. She smiled. "You've been doing a lot of that lately. Anything in particular?" she asked him. "Memories." He turned to face her, and then worry appeared in his eyes. <br>

>"You shouldn't be out here, in your condition. Your doctor says you need plenty of rest," he chided. She rolled her eyes and replied, "I'm fine. You don't need to worry about me." She leaned against him, and placed her head against his shoulder with a sigh. She closed her eyes, and Ash looked down on her with that special sparkle in his eyes, the kind people get when their loved one is near. "Loved ONES, now" Ash thought to himself. As the couple sat in peaceful silence, the small life inside of Misty stirred once in a silent agreement to Ash's thoughts.<br>

End  
file.